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# Quenching of Vibrationally Excited $N_2$ by $SO_2$

Chemistry and Physics Laboratory  
The Ivan A. Getting Laboratories  
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9 November 1977

Interim Report

Prepared for  
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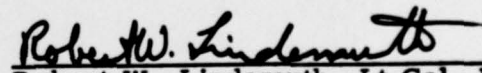
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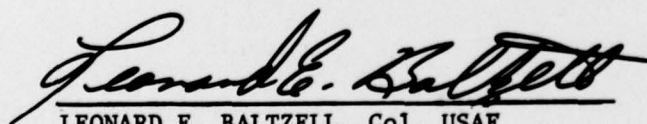
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20. ABSTRACT (Continue on reverse side if necessary and identify by block number) A photoionization detection technique has been used to measure the rate of quenching of vibrationally excited N <sub>2</sub> by SO <sub>2</sub> . The quenching rate coefficient was determined to be $(6 \pm 2.3) \times 10^{-16} \text{ cm}^3/\text{molecule} \cdot \text{sec}^{-1}$ .  + or - times 10 to the -16th power cu.cm.		

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## QUENCHING OF VIBRATIONALLY EXCITED $N_2$ BY $SO_2$

Considerable effort has been expended in recent years to determine energy transfer rate coefficients for processes relevant to high power laser systems, atmospheric radiance, and acoustic propagation. Numerous studies of  $SO_2$  relaxation have been reported using acoustic dispersion<sup>1-7</sup> and laser-induced fluorescence techniques.<sup>8-11</sup> This note reports the application of a photoionization detection technique to study the vibrational quenching of  $N_2$  by  $SO_2$ .

The apparatus employed to study  $N_2(v=1)$  quenching has been described in its application to  $CO_2$ ,  $H_2O$ ,  $NO$ ,  $H_2O$ , and  $O$ .<sup>12-16</sup> A flowing afterglow system coupled to a photoionization mass spectrometer comprised the reaction zone and detector. Detection was based upon the fact that the onset of photoionization of  $N_2(v=1)$  lies toward longer wavelengths than the  $N_2(v=0)$  photoionization limit. Signals caused by photoionization at 80.04 nm were attributed exclusively to  $N_2(v=1)$ , based upon previously reported evidence.<sup>12</sup> The  $N_2(v=1)$  was formed in a discharge in a flowing He- $N_2$  mixture. Flow velocities were typically 20m/sec, and total system pressures  $\sim 2$  Torr. The amount of  $N_2$  present in the system was varied from 3.3% to 35% of the total pressure.

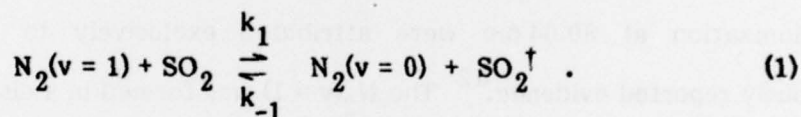
Quenching measurements were performed by observing the decrease in photoionization signal at 28 amu as a function of SO<sub>2</sub> concentration. This decrease defined a simple first order quenching rate coefficient,

$$k_{\text{obs}} = \frac{\ln I_0/I}{[\text{SO}_2 t]}$$

where [SO<sub>2</sub>] is the concentration of SO<sub>2</sub> added to the flow system and t is the reaction time. A correction due to repopulation of N<sub>2</sub>(v = 1) from N<sub>2</sub>(v > 1) increased k<sub>obs</sub> by a factor of 1.25 to give the quenching rate coefficient k<sub>q</sub>.<sup>13</sup>

The experimentally measured value of k<sub>q</sub> for N<sub>2</sub>(v = 1) quenched by SO<sub>2</sub> was found to be k<sub>q</sub> = (6 ± 2.3) × 10<sup>-16</sup> cm<sup>3</sup> molecule<sup>-1</sup>sec<sup>-1</sup> at 300°K.

This quenching rate coefficient represents the balance between the overall quenching of N<sub>2</sub>(v = 1) and reverse process population of N<sub>2</sub>(v = 1),

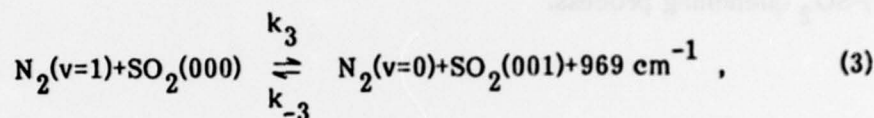
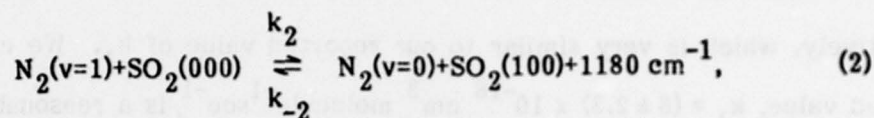


In order for k<sub>q</sub> to equal k<sub>1</sub>, any excited SO<sub>2</sub> produced in process (1) must be deactivated before the reverse reaction can occur. Vibrational self-relaxation times for SO<sub>2</sub> measured by Earl *et al.*<sup>10</sup> and others<sup>5</sup> indicate that SO<sub>2</sub> vibrational relaxation times for this work vary from ~ .5 msec to 5 msec, assuming that self-quenching for SO<sub>2</sub>(200) and other populated levels is at least as rapid as for SO<sub>2</sub>(100). Typical experimental reaction times were ~ 80 msec, which indicates that reverse processes should not be a significant effect. Experimental confirmation of this was obtained by varying the N<sub>2</sub> pressure from .15 Torr

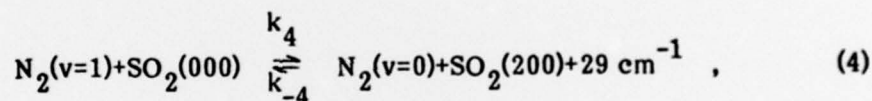


to .5 Torr and the  $\text{SO}_2$  pressure from .06 Torr to .6 Torr, with no observable change in the measured value of  $k_q$ . Thus we conclude that  $k_q \approx k_1$ .

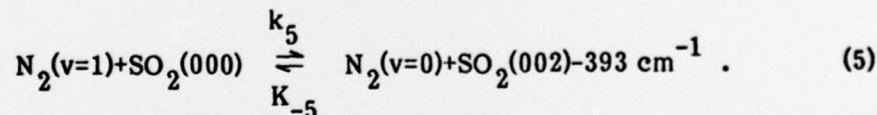
The most likely V-V transfer processes which could be responsible for this quenching of  $\text{N}_2(v=1)$ , based upon energy defect considerations, are



or the two quantum excitation processes



or



This experiment provides no information regarding the actual process occurring, since only the loss of  $\text{N}_2(v=1)$  is monitored, nor is there a reliable theoretical way of calculating the reaction rate coefficients for  $\text{N}_2 - \text{SO}_2$  V-V transfer processes. All that can be said with certainty is that simple theory<sup>17</sup> predicts that all four processes be much slower than a single-quantum resonant transfer process.

The value of the quenching rate coefficient for the  $N_2(v=1)$ - $SO_2$  system reported here may be compared to that for the  $CO(v=1)$ - $SO_2$  system, in which the energy defects for the processes involved are very similar to those shown in eq. (2) to (5). The  $CO$  quenching rate coefficient is reported by Kovacs<sup>18</sup> and Hancock et al.<sup>8</sup> to be  $(1.9 \pm .7) \times 10^{-15} \text{ cm}^3 \text{ molecule}^{-1} \text{ sec}^{-1}$  and  $(3.6 \pm .1) \times 10^{-16} \text{ cm}^3 \text{ molecule}^{-1} \text{ sec}^{-1}$ , respectively, which is very similar to our reported value of  $k_1$ . We conclude that the reported value,  $k_1 = (6 \pm 2.3) \times 10^{-16} \text{ cm}^3 \text{ molecule}^{-1} \text{ sec}^{-1}$ , is a reasonable value for the  $N_2(v=1)$ - $SO_2$  quenching process.

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